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## CUBA'S FUTURE.

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THE aid of the United States in the internal affairs of Cuba has again been requested by the President of that Republic, and in compliance with that request the Administration at Washington has decided to detail three United States Army officers for duty in Cuba to undertake the work of creating an effective, well-drilled and well-disciplined Cuban army. The wisdom of this action is conceded by all, especially by those who are familiar with the sentiment prevailing amongst the Cubans, and it is believed to be but one move in a game played under the surface by a certain class of residents in Cuba.

When the United States troops were sent to Cuba in October, 1906, it was with the avowed purpose of restoring and maintaining peace until the country should be in proper condition to hold an election and secure a President and other officials to administer the affairs of state. At that time the Cubans generally accepted the declared intentions of this country as sincere. But the prospect of a lasting and peaceful republican form of government for the island was not seriously considered by many of the better classes of citizens—that is, the merchants, professional men, planters, and others. These classes were frank in stating their belief that the island would never be able to maintain a republican form of government, for any considerable length of time, without the assistance and guidance of the United States or of some other strong country.

On the other hand, those who professed to believe that Cuba could eventually take care of itself without outside interference advanced the argument, in referring to the failure of the Palma government, that it is unreasonable to expect the island to be-

come a strong and united nation within so few years after its birth as a republic. They argued that all the great nations of the earth have been founded on revolution and bloodshed. They cited the fact that England became the strong nation that she is to-day only after brother had fought against brother, neighbor had burned the home of neighbor, and war and devastation had reduced the nation to ruins. They pointed to the United States as another example of a nation which, for years after its birth as a republic, was turbulent with political dissensions and threats of disintegration, and they called attention to the fact that, even after nearly a century of peace and prosperity, the nation was almost rent asunder by one of the most sanguinary struggles the world has ever witnessed.

Notwithstanding the force of these arguments, the conviction prevailed amongst the higher class of foreign residents in Cuba, as well as among many prominent natives of the island, that a stable republic could never be established; and it was repeatedly predicted by these people, and by some of the representative papers of Cuba, that as soon as the American forces were withdrawn there would be a recurrence of the events which caused the United States to send an army of pacification there in 1906; that it would be only a matter of time when the American troops would have to return to restore peace and protect foreign property.

These were the predictions made in 1906; at this time their verification seems imminent, for within a week after the withdrawal of the American army from Cuba an insurrection was started on the island, which, however, for the time being at least, was successfully suppressed.

The Cubans, like some other Latin-American peoples, appear to be imbued with an insatiable desire for revolution; and, while the present President of the Republic seems inclined to rule with an iron hand, it will not be forgotten that, with all the methods of oppression and suppression resorted to by the Government of Spain for many years, that nation was unable to quell the spirit of revolution on the island.

These revolutions will undoubtedly continue to recur, under a republic, so long as the present conditions exist, for the simple reason that it is impossible to create a sufficient number of political offices to satisfy the ambitions of all the political leaders or so-called "generals." The make-up of the Cuban is different

from that of the American citizen. In this country, if a man is removed from office under a change of administration or for other political reasons, he usually takes it as a matter of course, or, if he is defeated at the polls, he either smothers his feelings or lays plans for a future battle of the ballots. With the Cuban it is different. If he is removed from office or loses a victory at the polls, he immediately begins to "agitate"—not by that sort of peaceful agitation which is intended to instruct the people in the principles of the political party or faction to which he belongs, but by that agitation which smacks of personal revenge, which appeals particularly to the lawless element, and brings together in a protesting body the class of citizens who are ever ready to take up arms against the existing government, or to use alleged political grievances as a pretext for committing robberies and other depredations.

That the Liberal party, which fomented the revolution under the Palma government in 1906, had some cause for grievance is undoubtedly true. It is an acknowledged fact that the party then in power resorted to fraudulent methods at the elections in order to retain control of the government. The leaders of that party professed to believe that they were justified in this action, basing their belief upon the theory that their party represented the highest and most educated class of citizens in the Republic, those who were really interested in the welfare and upbuilding of the country, and that, having successfully conducted the affairs of state up to that time, they were justified in so manipulating the elections as to secure a victory for themselves. On the other hand, it may be said that the opposing party contained amongst its leaders many lawless and undesirable citizens, and that, had they succeeded to the administration of the government, they would have made as complete a failure as did the party against which their armed opposition was directed.

When the American forces arrived in Cuba in October, 1906, the country was in a chaotic condition. While the "*insurrectos*" and "volunteers" had presumably turned in all their arms to the American commission created for that purpose, the planters and property-owners generally throughout the island were in constant fear of the sword and the torch of the brigand. A system of blackmail had sprung up in the island which was exceedingly harassing. Armed bands, camped in the mountains, would ap-

proach the owners and managers of large sugar and tobacco estates, and demand the "loan" of a certain sum of money (which they never expected to return), threatening to apply the torch to the fields if such sum was not forthcoming. It is understood that some of the companies owning large sugar plantations set aside a certain amount each year for the satisfaction of these blackmailers, believing it more economic to lose this sum outright than to lose hundreds of thousands of dollars by having their crops destroyed by fire.

During the first days of the late American occupation, daily reports were received of threatened depredations, and a great many requests were made by sugar-planters that small detachments of American soldiers should be sent to their estates for the protection of their property. This the Commanding General of the American army very wisely refused to do. Under his policy the troops were distributed throughout the provinces in larger bodies, and from each station detachments were sent out on "practice marches," covering the country in its vicinity. This had the effect of not only hardening the troops and familiarizing them with the character of the surrounding country, but it had a reassuring influence upon the peaceful citizens and an intimidating influence upon the lawless and evil-doers.

Under this system the conditions on the island became as peaceful as could be desired. The planters were given an opportunity to harvest their crops without menace, financial conditions became improved and everywhere the people assumed their normal vocations and peace reigned supreme.

Realizing that these conditions resulted from the influence of the American army in Cuba, the better class of Cubans—except, possibly, the professional politicians and agitators—regret the withdrawal of American troops and the return to a republican form of government on the island. They would much prefer to see the guardian hand of the United States extended over the island for all time. And ultimately this will be undoubtedly done in one form or another.

If the present Republic falls, and the United States is again compelled to interfere in the affairs of the island, it is safe to say that something more than re-pacification will result. In this connection, two courses are open to us: the annexation of the island or the establishment of a protectorate over it.

As far as the Cubans, generally, are concerned—the rank and file, so to speak—there are few who advocate annexation. There are several reasons for this. In the first place, the Cubans, having for centuries fought for their liberty, and having finally succeeded in obtaining it, would no doubt seriously object to losing their national entity in this way, although they are willing to accept the protecting influence and guiding hand of the United States, provided they can have some voice in the government. It may also be stated that the political leaders realize that, should the United States annex the island, practically all the high-salaried positions would be held by Americans, and this would be very distasteful to the office-seekers, who constitute a large percentage of the population.

While the native sugar-planter has had a period of prosperity since 1903, he has not received much direct benefit from the lowering of the tariff duty; and even if the tariff should be abolished under a scheme of annexation, it would inure to the benefit of sugar interests in the United States rather than to the native Cuban planter. What the latter desires more than anything else is the assurance that peace will be maintained on the island; he will in that event look after the financial end of the business. It is needless to say, also, that the question of annexation would mean a prolonged fight in Congress, as did the reduction of the Cuban tariff in 1903.

The last solution of the question—that is, the establishment of a protectorate—seems to be the most logical and probably the easiest to consummate.

In the administration of their government, there are three conditions which the Cubans desire to prevail: First, security from foreign invasion or interference; second, a force adequate to suppress interior disturbances; and, third, opportunity to hold a reasonable share of the public offices under an independent government. They believe that these ends can be accomplished with least difficulty through an American protectorate, and this scheme would undoubtedly meet the hearty approval of the Cubans at large. In Cuba it is discussed more than any other proposition, for it would not injure the pride of the people, it would allow them to hold office under the government, it would assure peaceful conditions on the island and prevent encroachment or invasion by any other foreign nation. By this means, also, the tariff

question could be allowed to remain *in statu quo*, and thus any opposition could be allayed that would otherwise arise from the sugar, tobacco, fruit and other interests in this country.

This scheme could be carried out in two ways, either of which would entail but slight cost to this Government or to the Cuban government.

During the late occupation the United States maintained between five and six thousand troops on the island, and that number proved to be entirely sufficient to assure peace and protect public and private property. Should this Government establish a protectorate over the island, a force of approximately the same size could be stationed on the island, the Cuban government being required to pay the increased expense incident to the service of our troops in that country, so that the United States would be at no loss in this respect.

It is believed, however, that the better method to pursue would be to utilize the present Armed Forces of Cuba, which consist of the Rural Guards and the Artillery Corps, numbering about 4,500 officers and men. This force, while having a military organization, is lacking in training and discipline. With these faults corrected, the armed forces of the island would undoubtedly be able to meet the requirements of the case. The reorganization and training of these forces would be a matter of time, and it can be accomplished without much difficulty by the three United States army officers who have recently been detailed for this purpose; the officers to take charge of the military establishment until such time as experience showed that the Cuban army could permanently maintain peace at home. Owing to the close proximity of the United States to the island, and the recognized policy set forth in the Monroe Doctrine, the subject of foreign invasion need not be considered at this time.

The scheme of instruction by American officers, suggested above, has been successfully tried before. When the Artillery Corps of the Cuban Armed Forces was organized in the winter of 1901-02 an American artillery officer was detailed as instructor, and through his efforts that branch of the military service has been brought up to quite a high state of efficiency. This policy would probably entail a smaller expenditure of money by the Cuban government than would the policy of keeping our troops on the island for any length of time, and in case it should be

found expedient at any future time to again turn over the government to the Cubans *in toto*, it would be an easy matter to recall our officers to this country to resume their normal duties.

Should the present force of 4,500 troops be found insufficient to carry out the purposes set forth above, there is a law now on the statute-books of Cuba authorizing an increase of the Armed Forces to about 12,000, and under this law additional troops could be recruited until the number was obtained which would assure success.

In addition to the detail of American army officers to instruct and train the military forces of the island, it would probably be wise to appoint a sufficient number of experienced men from this country to act as advisers to the various civil departments. During the late occupation army officers were so detailed with wonderful success. Or the policy of Great Britain in Egypt might be followed, by granting authority to the American Minister to act as an adviser to the head of the government of Cuba, and to the American Consul-General to oversee all matters relating to the finances of the country. While England has never declared any definite policy in regard to Egypt under British suzerainty, that country has become a progressive and prosperous nation where corruption and decay once existed; and what has been accomplished by England in Egypt can certainly be accomplished by the United States in Cuba.

Under such a policy the future of Cuba need never be in doubt. With a stable government and peaceful conditions existing on the island, with its fertile soil and other natural physical advantages, Cuba, in reality as well as in name, would become the "Pearl of the Antilles."

H. A. AUSTIN.